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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FM ZEBARI ON THE MEK

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gary A. Grappo, for reasons
1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) In a September 14 meeting with Iraqi FM Hoshyar Zebari, Pol M/C urged caution as the GOI tackled the issue of moving the Mujahideen el-Khalq (MEK) out of Ashraf. While recognizing that the GOI had a sovereign right to act, he pressed for it to delay taking action for a couple of months and to attempt to de-escalate the situation in order to improve possibilities for a negotiated resolution. Pol M/C also suggested that the GOI consider asking a neutral third party, such as UNAMI, ICRC, or UNHCR to serve as observers, in case there were problems when the GOI took action to implement its planned move of the MEK to another location in Muthanna province, farther away from the Iranian border. The presence of observers could possibly help convince the MEK members that the move was a legitimate step and not, as they now argue, "a plot hatched in Tehran."

¶2. (C) Zebari welcomed the ideas and acknowledged the importance for Iraq to demonstrate that it had done everything possible to resolve the situation peacefully. He said that he was getting "lots of letters" on this subject, "from old friends," which he found strange on the one hand, since the MEK was clearly "a cult." On the other hand, he recognized how effective the MEK was at public outreach and propaganda, especially in Europe. Zebari noted that one of the problems the GOI faced in dealing with the MEK is that too many different GOI agencies considered themselves responsible for the MEK issue now, including the Ministries of Interior, Defense, and Human Rights, as well as the PM's office, and the office of the Diyala governor. "So it is difficult to give you a clear answer" about how the GOI would proceed, said Zebari. The FM reinforced the GOI's continuing adherence to the understandings made with us regarding the necessity of humane treatment for MEK members at Ashraf and the GOI's commitment not to forcibly repatriate any of them. Other points raised in this meeting are reported septel.

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